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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01

INR-07 SAL-01 CG-00 DLOS-06 OES-06 LAB-04 SIL-01 H-02

L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 /088 W
---------- 055444
O R 101040Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5322
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS
USMISSION GENEVA
USNMR SHAPE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK
SUBJECT: SEAMEN'S CRISIS

REF: (A) LONDON 14182 (B) LONDON 14239

SUMMARY. THE FIRST REALLY CENTRAL MEETING ON THE IMPENDING SEAMEN'S STRIKE WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE CLOSE, MID-DAY SEPTEMBER 10, OF THE TUC CONGRESS WHEN
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THE TUC ECONOMIC COMMITTEE MEETS THE FULL 18-MAN

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EXECUTIVE OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN. LAST NIGHT'S MEETING BETWEEN TUC LEADERS (REFTEL B) AND SOME OF THE NUS LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING JIM SLATER THE NUS GENERAL SECRETARY, RESULTED SIMPLY IN A RESTATEMENT OF THE TUC-GOVERNMENT PAY POLICY LINE AND OF THE NUS CLAIM WHICH WOULD BREAK IT. (THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE MEANWHILE HAS POSTPONED HIS PLANNED VISIT TO CANADA THIS MORNING BECAUSE OF THE CRISIS AND THE GOVERNMENT IS, OF COURSE, ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THE RESULTS OF THE TUC LEADERSHIP EFFORTS.) END SUMMARY

1. LAST NIGHT'S MEETING IN BRIGHTON, AS ONE TUC OFFICIAL DESCRIBED IT TO US, WAS AN EFFORT TO START THE "SOFTENING UP" PROCESS IN ORDER TO DEFLECT THE NUS FROM ITS COLLISION COURSE. TUC GENERAL SECRETARY LEN MURRAY TOLD THE PRESS AFTERWARDS THAT THE UPHOLDING OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT WAS IMPRESSED ON THESEAMEN; ALSO THE NEED TO PROTECT THE NATION'S INTEREST. HOWEVER, THE REAL TOUGH TALKING WILL TAKE PLACE IN EARNEST WHEN THE TUC LEADERS MEET THE FULL NUS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, A NUMBER OF WHOM HAVE BEEN SUMMONED FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

2. IT IS VERY CLEAR THAT THE TUC WILL INSIST ON HOLDING THE LINE AGAINST THE NUS CLAIM IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE OF ITS PAY POLICY FROM FALLING APART. ALREADY SEVERAL OF THE UNION LEADERS IN BRIGHTON HAVE NOTED THAT THEIR UNIONS WOULD BE FORCED TO GO FOR ADDITIONAL PAY IF THE NUS CLAIM WAS MET.

3. IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO FIND ANY ROOM FOR MANEUVER FOR THE POLICY AND THE CLAIM, BUT JACK JONES TOLD US PRIVATELY LAST NIGHT THAT THE SEAMEN "HAD SHOWN US SOME POINTS WE NEVER KNEW EXISTED". IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IN ORDER TO GET THE SEAMEN "OFF THE HOOK" SOME FACE-SAVING FORMULA WHICH STILL KEEPS THE PAY POLICY IN TACT MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BE FOUND, BUT AT THE MOMENT IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE A CLASSIC CASE OF IRRESISTIBLE FORCE AND IMMOVABLE OBJECT. THE SUGGESTION HAS BEEN MADE BY SOME OBSERVERS HERE IN BRIGHTON OF THE POSSIBLE
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EXPULSION BY THE TUC OF THE NUS, IF IT PERSISTS IN

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SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01

INR-07 SAL-01 CG-00 DLOS-06 OES-06 LAB-04 SIL-01 PM-04

H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00

/092 W
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DEFYING THE REST OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND STRIKES
AT MIDNIGHT SATURDAY. THE TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION, IT IS
SAID, WHICH IS A GENERAL UNION, DOES IN FACT HAVE THE
CAPABILITY OF "MOVING IN" TO THE SEAMEN'S ORGANIZING
AREAS AND SETTING UP A TGWU SEAMEN'S UNIT, BUT THIS
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REMAINS ONLY A VERY FAR OUT POSSIBILITY AND WOULD NOT RESOLVE THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS. MOREOVER, SOME TUC UNIONS, IN THE INTEREST OF UNION SOLIDARITY, WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO CROSS SEAMEN'S PICKET LINES EVEN THOUGH THEY OPPOSE THE NUS DECISION TO STRIKE. THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY INCLUDE SOME OF THE DOCK WORKERS IN JONES' OWN UNION. JONES TOLD US THAT THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS FEDERATION (ITF) OF WHICH HE IS A LEADER, WOULD NOT, REPEAT NOT, COOPERATE WITH THE NUS IF IT STRIKES.

4. THE SESSION BETWEEN THE SEAMEN LEADERSHIP AND THE TUC IS LIKELY TO BE MARATHON IN CHARACTER AND COULD WELL SPILL OVER UNTIL THE DEADLINE OF THE STRIKE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE ITS CONTINGENCY PLANS TO DEAL WITH THE STRIKE BUT IF IT GOES ON AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED IT WOULD BE A SEVERE BLOW TO THE ECONOMY INDEED.

ARMSTRONG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, MEETINGS, MERCHANT SEAMEN, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON14250
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760342-0255
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760974/aaaackqo.tel
Line Count: 189
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LONDON 14182, 76 LONDON 14239
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEAMEN'S CRISIS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006